



Wisconsin
Action for Healthy Kids®



Helping Wisconsin Youth Reach Their *Full* Potential



*By Improving
Nutrition and
Increasing Physical
Activity in Schools*



WISCONSIN MILK
MARKETING BOARD
WISCONSIN DAIRY PRODUCERS



*Wisconsin Action
for Healthy Kids
is a coalition
addressing the
epidemic of
overweight,
undernourished
and sedentary
youth by
improving
nutrition and
increasing
physical activity
in schools
throughout
the state.*

Experience indicates that healthy behavior and academic achievement are mutually reinforcing: students who take care of their health tend to perform better academically, and students whose academic achievement is above average tend to take better care of their health.

Wisconsin Action for Healthy Kids along with the National Action for Healthy Kids network has three major thrusts:

- 1. Improving children's eating habits** by increasing access to nutritious foods and beverages throughout the school campus and by integrating nutrition education into the curriculum.
- 2. Increasing children's physical activity** by adding or maintaining physical education courses and recess and promoting after-school and co-curricular programs.
- 3. Educating administrators, teachers, children and parents** about how nutrition and physical activity impact children's health and academic achievement.

An Outlook on Obesity

Obesity rates are sky-rocketing. Rates have doubled among children and tripled among teens in the last 20 years. In the United States alone, nearly 9 million youth are overweight. In Wisconsin, 24 percent of Wisconsin high school students are overweight or at risk of becoming overweight. {1}

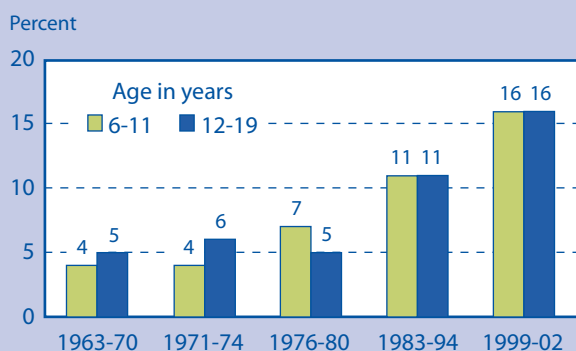
The increase in obesity rates of children and adolescents is a major contributor to diabetes and other chronic diseases. The obese are more likely to have elevated blood pressure and suffer the psycho-social effects of being overweight.

Overweight is caused by a combination of too many calories from foods and beverages and too little physical activity.

Overfed Yet Undernourished

With food available at so many different locations throughout the school, it becomes increasingly difficult for children to make healthy food choices. More students are choosing foods sold through a la carte offerings in

Prevalence of overweight among children and adolescents ages 6-19 years



NOTE: Excludes pregnant women starting with 1971-74. Pregnancy status not available for 1963-65 and 1966-70. Data for 1963-65 are for children 6-11 years of age; data for 1966-70 are for adolescents 12-17 years of age, not 12-19 years.
SOURCE: CDC/NCHS, NHES and NHANES

the school cafeteria, snack bars, vending machines and fundraising efforts that tend to be low in nutrient density and high in fat, added sugars and calories.

The epidemic of obesity has been growing because children are taking in more calories than they burn. In fact, only a small percentage of school-aged children meet the recommendations of the new food guidance system, found at www.mypyramid.gov.

For example, fewer than one third of school children consume the recommended servings of milk group servings on any given day.^{2} Students are drinking twice as much carbonated soda as milk, causing them to miss out on calcium and eight essential nutrients needed to increase bone density and combat osteoporosis. In addition, only 28 percent of Wisconsin students eat the recommended servings of fruits and vegetables.^{2}

Percentage of Wisconsin high school students who ate five or more serving of fruits and vegetables per day

Year	Sex	T	F	M
2003		28 (±2)	27 (±3)	29 (±3)
2001		26 (±2)	24 (±3)	29 (±3)
1999		28 (±3)	27 (±4)	29 (±4)

Legend: Sex T=Total F=Female M=Male

Many children are not meeting the dietary guideline recommendations because they are skipping breakfast. Schools that serve breakfast can help students have higher nutrient intakes and provide a healthy school environment. Research shows that students who eat breakfast at school have increased standardized achievement test scores, improved attendance and reduced tardiness.^{3}

The Lack of Physical Activity

The lack of meaningful physical activity among today's children has become a major health risk. Many school systems no longer have scheduled recess. The vast majority of children travel to school by car or bus, leaving only 10 percent of children to walk or bike to school.^{4} A significant percentage of Wisconsin students do not participate in sufficient

amount of physical activity. Among high school students, 37 percent had not participated in sufficient vigorous physical activity and 72 percent had not participated in sufficient moderate physical activity during the past seven days.^{1} Currently, Wisconsin's law requires that grades K-6 meet three times a week for physical education, grades 7 and 8 a minimum of once a week, and grades 9-12 must complete 1 1/2 credits to graduate. As inactivity increases with age, it also leads to increased health risks and medical costs. In addition to weight control, regular physical activity substantially reduces the risk of dying of coronary heart disease, the nation's leading cause of death, and decreases the risk for stroke, colon cancer, diabetes and high blood pressure.

Helping Wisconsin Children Reach Their Full Potential

Poor nutrition and lack of physical activity are not only root causes of overweight and obesity, they are also factors associated with lower academic achievement. Studies demonstrate that when children's basic nutritional and fitness needs are met, they attain higher achievement levels. Schools have a critical role in helping students learn and practice healthy eating habits and in providing the knowledge, motivation, and skills children need for lifelong physical activity.^{5}

What Can You Do?

Work with your school district to promote healthy eating and physical activity in your school. Use the resources provided by Wisconsin Action for Healthy Kids to promote a healthy school environment.

www.actionforhealthykids.org

References

- ^{1}Center for Disease Control Fact Sheet, The Obesity Epidemic and Wisconsin Students, 2005
- ^{2}Center for Disease Control, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2003
- ^{3}Burghardt J, Devaney B. eds "The School Nutrition Dietary Assessment Study," 1995
- ^{4}Center for Disease Control Fact Sheet, Kids Walk-to-School Program, 2005
- ^{5}Bodgen, J.F. Fit, healthy and ready to learn: a school health policy guide NASBE, 2000

Wisconsin Action for Healthy Kids Coalition Members*

A.L.L. for Kids, Inc.
American Cancer Society
American Heart Association
Appleton Medical Center and Theda Clark Medical Center
Black River Falls School District
Children's Alliance of Wisconsin
Children's Health Alliance of Wisconsin
Children's Health Education Center
City of Milwaukee Health Department
Committed to Kids Pediatric Weight Management Program
Dane County Department of Human Services Public Health Division
De Soto School Districts
Department of Health and Family Services
Department of Public Instruction
Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Health
Green Lake School District
Greenfield Bilingual School
Ho-Chunk Youth Fitness Program
Hunger Task Force of Milwaukee
Madison Department of Public Health
Menasha School District
Milwaukee Public Schools
Nutrition & More, L.L.C.
Office of the Governor
Portage County Health Department
Sheboygan County Health and Human Services
University of Wisconsin Extension
UW- Madison Cooperative Extension
UW-Madison Comprehensive Cancer Center
UW-Madison Department of Family Medicine
UW-Madison Department of Nutritional Sciences
UW-Madison, Home Grown Lunch
UW-Milwaukee
Viroqua School District
WEA Trust
West Salem School District
Wisconsin Association for Health, Physical Activity, Education, Recreation and Dance
Wisconsin Association of School Boards
Wisconsin Association of School Nurses
Wisconsin Association of Student Councils
Wisconsin Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development
Wisconsin Dietetic Association
Wisconsin Division of Public Health
Wisconsin Family and Consumer Educators
Wisconsin Governor's Challenge
Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board
Wisconsin Nutrition Education Network
Wisconsin Parent Teacher Association
Wisconsin School Food Service Association
Wisconsin Sports Development Corps



*As of Fall 2005

For more information or to join, visit
www.actionforhealthykids.org